

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Initially, Applicant would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided.

Applicant also acknowledges with appreciation the indication that claims 9-17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, and that claims 18-20 are allowed on page 3 of the present Official Action.

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 7 and 8 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 9, 13, 14, and 17 will have been amended. In this regard and without acquiescing in the propriety of the Examiner's objection, Applicant has generally rewritten claims 9, 13, 14, and 17 into independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, an indication of the allowability of claims 9, 13, 14, and 17 is respectfully requested in the next Official communication. No new matter has been added by the abovementioned amendments.

Claims 9-20 are currently pending for consideration by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections, and allowance of all claims pending in the present Application.

Anticipation Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by SCHUBERT et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,741,105);

With respect to the anticipation rejections of claims 7 and 8, and without in any manner, form or shape acquiescing in the propriety of any of the Examiner's rejections

applied in the present application under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), Applicant has canceled claims 7 and 8 without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, at least because of the cancellation of claims 7 and 8, the anticipation rejections of the same have now been rendered moot.

Therefore, for at least the reasons above, it is respectfully requested that the anticipation rejections be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant again wishes to thank the Examiner for indicating that independent claims 18-20 are allowed.

With respect to objected to claims 9-17, Applicant has rewritten dependent claim 9 into independent form including all the limitations of canceled claims 7 and 8. Applicant has also rewritten dependent claims 13, 14, and 17 into independent form including all the limitations of canceled claim 7. Applicant notes that no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's objection is made by the present amendment. Thus, at least because the Examiner indicated that dependent claims 9-17 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form, and because dependent claims 9, 13, 14, and 17 have been rewritten into independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, the objections of the same have now been rendered moot.

With respect to the Examiner's objection of dependent claims 10-12, 15 and 16, at least because dependent claims 10-12 depend, either directly or indirectly, from allowable independent claim 9 which is allowable for at least the reasons discussed *supra*, and because dependent claims 15 and 16 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 14 which is also allowable for at least the reasons discussed *supra*, it is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are also allowable for at least the

reasons discussed *supra*. Further, all dependent claims set forth a further combination of elements neither taught nor disclosed by any of the references of record.

Thus, in view of the amendments and arguments herein, Applicant submits that claims 9-20 are in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the claims in the present application are clearly patentable over SCHUBERT et al. and an indication to such effect is respectfully requested, in due course.

COMMENTS ON STATEMENTS OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE AND FOR
THE INDICATION OF ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

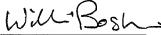
In response to the Statement of Reasons for the Indication of Allowable Subject Matter and the Statement of Reasons for Allowance, mailed by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on May 30, 2008, along with the above-noted Official Action, Applicant wishes to clarify the record with respect to the basis for patentability of the allowable claim in the present application. In this regard, while Applicant does not disagree with the Examiner's indications that certain identified features are not disclosed by the prior art references, as noted by the Examiner, Applicant further wishes to clarify that the independent claims in the present application recite a particular combination of features, and the basis for patentability of each of these claims is further based on the particular totality of the features recited therein. The dependent claims set forth additional bases for their patentability in accordance with their recited limitations as well as in accordance with the particular limitations of the respective base claims.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests an indication to that effect. Applicant has argued the allowability of the claims and pointed out deficiencies of the applied references. Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate.

Applicant notes that this amendment is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance and should not be considered as surrendering equivalents of the territory between the claims prior to the present amendment and the amended claims. Further, no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejections and objections is made by the present amendment. All other amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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